

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00 AID-05 ACDA-07 IO-13

DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 OPR-02 /112 W

-----094825 271302Z /53

R 271015Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5107

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1288

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SO, US, ET

SUBJECT: CALM IN MOGADISCIO

SUMMARY: MOGADISCIO IS CALM BUT MARKED BY CERTAIN AMOUNT OF UNCERTAINTY AS TO TRUE SITUATION IN OGADEN. DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN OUR VIEW IS POORLY INFORMED AND ESPECIALLY PRONE TO SUBSTITUTE RUMOR FOR FACT. SIAD'S RECENT AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT WAS NOT SERIOUS NOR WAS IT ANYTHING OTHER THAN ACCIDENT. DESPITE PAUCITY OF INFORMATION, THERE IS NEVERTHELESS AIR OF EXPECTATION IN MOGADISCIO THAT CHANGES ARE IN WIND, PARTICULARLY IN OGADEN. END SUMMARY.

1. DESPITE ADDIS REPORTS THAT FULL SCALE WARFARE NOW TAKING PLACE IN OGADEN BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI REGULARS, MOGADISCIO  
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RETAINS ITS BUSINESS-AS-USUAL CHARACTER. SOMALIS ARRIVING IN MOGADISCIO FROM HARGEISA ARE STRUCK BY CONTRACT BETWEEN TWO  
CIPIES.

2. HARGEISA HAS BEEN VISIBLY AFFECTED BY OGADEN FIGHTING.  
FOOD SHORTAGES, EMPTY SHOPS, EMPTY TEA AND COFFEE HOUSES,  
AND ABSENSE OF YOUNG MEN ON STREETS REFLECTS SENSE OF NATIONAL

EMERGENCY IN HARGEISA. SOME SENSE OF CRISIS NOT RPT NOT FELT IN MOGADISCIO.

3. WHILE IN MOGADISCIO SOME FOOD SHORTAGES ARE APPARENT AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT SOMETIIMES CONSPICUOUS, ON SURFACE AT LEAST LIFE IN CAPITAL CONTINUES AS BEFORE. TRUCKS TRANSPORTING CAPTURED ETHIOPIAN SOLDIERS EVOKE MINIMUM CURIOSITY OF MEN ON STREET.

4. MOST MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY--AND MANY SOMALIS AS WELL-- SEEM TO HAVE ONLY DIMMEST SENSE OF WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN OGADEN. CONFLICTING REPORTS ISSUED BY ADDIS AND MOGADISCIO RADIOS SEEM TO HAVE ADDED TO CONFUSION. FEW SEEM TO UNDERSTAND SERIOUSNESS OF ETHIOPIAN MILITARY SITUATION IN OGADEN-- AT GELADI, WARDER OR DEGAHABUR, FOR EXAMPLE-- OR INDEED IN ERITREA.

5. FRENCH, FOR EXAMPLE, SEEM TO CREDIT REPORTS THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL INVADE SOMALIA BEFORE AUGUST 1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR, TO CITE ANOTHER, BELIEVES SIAD SUFFERED VERY SERIOUS SETBACK AT DIRE DAWA AND THAT SOMALI GUERRILLA SUCCESSES NOW ON WANE IN OGADEN AFTER INITIAL VICTORIES. HIS SOURCES HOWEVER ARE AS SUSPECT AS ANY OTHER. WEST GERMANS WERE SERIOUSLY ENOUGH ALARMED ABOUT THREAT OF ETHIOPIAN INVASION IN NORTH TO CONSIDER EVACUATING THEIR TECHNICAL EXPERTS. RUMORS SWEEPED THROUGH LOCAL COMMUNITY SEVERAL DAYS AGO THAT UN WITHDRAWING ITS PERSONNEL FROM NORTH.

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6. MANY SOMALIS ON OTHER HAND SEEM TO CREDIT MILITARY SUCCESSES IN OGADEN. MANY SENSE VICTORY IN THE MAKING. WHILE OGADEN PLACE NAMES MOST FAMILIAR TO SOMALIS FROM OGADEN --AND MUCH LESS TO LOCAL POPULATIONS--REPORTED CAPTURE OF GODE SEEMS TO HAVE STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD.

7. VOA AND BBC ANNOUNCEMENTS JULY 26 AND 27 OF US AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPLY DEFENSIVE ARMS HAS STIRRED LOCAL INTEREST BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO DRAW ANY CONCLUSIONS. OUR LOCAL SOMALI EMPLOYEES AT EMBASSY ARE JUBILANT AND ALLEGE MUCH OF MOGADISCIO FEELS LIKEWISE BUT NEWS IS STILL TOO FRESH TO ASSESS LOCAL REACTION.

8. ETHIOPIAN CHARGE SEEN OFF AT AIRPORT THIS MORNING BY WIFE AND SISTER-IN-LAW WHO REMAIN IN MOGADISCIO. IN BRIEF ENCOUNTER, KEBEDE SHOWED MINIMUM CONCERN WITH VOA REPORTS OF US ARMS SUPPLY TO SIAD (STATE 174997/1).

9. DURING AMBASSADOR AND DCM'S CALL ON VICE PRESIDENT KULMIYE JULY 26 TO INTRODUCE NEW PAO KULMIYE STATED HE THOROUGHLY BRIEFED ON RESULTS ADDOU'S RECENT TRIP TO UNITED STATES BUT EVADED OUR ATTEMPT ENGAGE HIM IN AN OVERVIEW CURRENT SITUATION IN THE OGADEN. IN REPLY TO AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION, KULMIYE STATED SIAD'S PHYSICAL CONDITION FOLLOWING RECENT AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT: "THE OLD MAN IS OKAY

BUT HE HAS A FEW SCRATCHES ON HIS FOREHEAD; HE WAS LUCKY--THE  
ACCIDENT HAPPENED WHEN HE WAS TRAVELLING 160 KPH". WE ARE  
SATISFIED THAT MISHAP WAS AS ACCIDENTAL AS HE DESCRIBED IT.  
10. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD US HE SAW SIAD AT MEDINA HOSPITAL  
ON HIGHT OF 24TH. SIAD HAD SUMMONED HIM FOR SOLE PURPOSE OF  
DEMONSTRATING HE WAS IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION AND REMAINED IN FULL  
COMMAND OF "SITUATION". AS FURTHER PROOF FOREGOING SIAD LATE  
AFTERNOON JULY 26 WAS SEEN BY MANY SOMALIS AND MEMBERS  
DIPLOMATIC CORPS DRIVING THROUGH PRINCIPAL SECTIONS OF MOGADISCIO.

11. IN SUM, MOGADISCIO ATMOSPHERE IS CALM BUT MARKED BY  
CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONFUSION AS MAN-IN-STREET AND DIPLOMATIC  
CORPS SCRAMBLE FOR FACTS. THERE IS NEVERTHELESS SENSE OF  
EXPECTATION IN THE AIR.  
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## Message Attributes

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